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A METHOD OF CONCENTRATION OF PARASITIC EGGS IN FECES

William H. Gates

The microscopic examination of feces for eggs of intestinal, hepatic and some other parasites depends largely for success upon discarding unnecessary fecal matter and concentrating eggs into as small a space as possible. Many methods have been devised (see Hall, Bull. 135, U. S. Dept. Agric.). A modification used by the author is as follows:

After straining through a seive a large quantity of material, or using a smaller quantity without this, feces are centrifuged first with water to wash off surplus lighter material, and later with sodium chlorid, or better, calcium chlorid solution, sp. gr. 1.250, to remove the bulk of the material and float the eggs practically free from sediment. The top one or two cubic centimeters are then removed with a pipette, drawing chiefly from the rim of the meniscus, and centrifuged again with water, which throws the eggs to the bottom. The water is then poured off, leaving *all* of the sediment in the bottom. This sediment is agitated vigorously by holding the tube in the closed hand and pounding on the table. This stirs up all or nearly all of the eggs which may have stuck to the bottom, though a few eggs cannot be removed except with a brush. The sediment is quickly poured into a small dish. The centrifuge tube is rinsed out by squirting water forcibly into it and this also is poured immediately into the dish. The eggs settle rather rapidly and are loosened from the bottom by forcing a little water around the edge to produce a slight whorl. Then before the eggs have a chance to settle, agitate the dish in the same circular direction so that the water tends to form a vortex, gradually diminishing the motion until it is hardly more than a jar. Practically all of the eggs will be found to have settled within a very small field.

For gross examination with the low powers, the eggs may be left in the dish and examined directly. To examine more carefully, under a high degree of concentration, draw up with a pipette a small quantity of water from the center of the mass of eggs; hold this vertical and steady for a half minute or so. Most of the eggs will settle, so that a single drop forced out on the slide will contain nearly all, if not all, of the eggs drawn up into the pipette. For still further concentration, allow the eggs on the slide to settle, and then with a blotter or lens paper very carefully remove a portion of the water from the top of the drop and add another drop. If repeated with care, a large mass of eggs may be collected in the space of a cover slip. This is especially satisfactory if the eggs have been in alcohol for the alcohol will evaporate, leaving the eggs in the center.